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United for Quality Care

February 23, 2022
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Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Morning Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee. My name is Jonathan, I'm from Gales Ferry, and I have been a PCA for almost 3 years and I care for my younger brother that has Downs Syndrome and receives services through DSS & DDS. It means everything that I can care for my brother. My parents are elderly and I don't know how they could make it work without me.

Eating, drinking, bathing, exercise, and basic survival is dependent on care. My brother and the other 6,000 consumers' lives depend on dependable caregivers. My brother's previous caregiver who was with him the last 10 years had to leave the field when she had a baby due to the fact that there are no benefits. A pathway to 20\$ an hour and basic benefits like health insurance and paid time off is a great investment to ensure the invisible backbone of the healthcare system (homecare workers) can thrive and live our lives with the dignity and respect we deserve. It was incredibly disappointing that in DSS' draft plan we only saw a fraction of the ARPA money going toward wages, and none toward these benefits.

As homecare workers we work tirelessly around the clock and serve as the invisible backbone of the healthcare system. We all do a job that serves our states most delicate and vulnerable citizens and we do so with the love and quality care they deserve. But what about us? Our consumers can count on us for their survival; we are asking if we can count on the State of CT for ours.

Thank you for your time.